

**FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET ADJUSTMENT  
PUBLIC HEARINGS  
ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY NETWORK  
(AELN) – 01/10/24 1 pm**

Hi everyone,

My name is Tuipate Fidele Mubiay, Board Member at the Vermont Adult Learning. I am originally from the Democratic Republic of The Congo (DRC). I came to Vermont in 1998, and since then I got stuck here. I started my school at the Community College of Vermont (CCV), where I got my Associate degree in Human Services, and I am now working at the same school as Coordinator of Student Advising or Academic Advisor. After CCV, I attended Johnson State College, earned my Bachelor's degree in Psychology – Behavioral Sciences, and went on for a degree in Social Work at the University of Vermont (UVM). I tell you this short story of my studies to emphasize the importance of work done by organizations such as the Adult Education and Literacy Network.

So, I am here today to testify about the work and benefits of the Adult Education and Literacy Network (AELN). I am here to ask for additional \$500.000 to

support the work of AELN. In my community I know and meet many residents who came from countries where English is not their first language. Upon arrival in the United States, they need to learn English and other skills in order to integrate into the mainstream culture, be able to communicate, get higher education, and look for a good paying job. I also work with many American-born students who attended an AELN school in their towns. Both refugees and immigrants as well as Americans-born students have been successful because the education they received through AELN schools was well structured and student-focused.

There are many benefits when attending an Adult learning school, but because of the short time given me, I will address couple of them:

Our schools offer a broad range of services - and those services are targeted, tailored and relevant to each student's goals and needs. Our schools offer different tools to enable students to reach their full potential. If you have a chance to meet our alumni from your cities or towns, they will tell you how they enjoyed their journey, and they will also say that attending AELN school was one of the best choices of their lives.

Our schools also prepare Vermonters for good paying jobs. I have seen students going from learning English to becoming teachers, registered nurses, doctors, engineers, and politicians in their cities and towns, etc. As you all know, Vermont needs skilled employees, and AELN is the answer to this need. As our State is becoming more and more multicultural, giving this opportunity to refugees and immigrants, but also to all Vermonters, is the right thing to do. We educate and send into our communities students who are equipped and ready to respond to challenges, students who help boost the Vermont economy. They live here, pay taxes here, and stay here. They like this state because it is their home.

- Our students are at the center of the work we do.
- Success looks different for every individual, and for many it stems from a shift in their mindset. Adult Education and Literacy programs help people see their potential and achieve their goals.
- We know that increasing literacy (reading, writing and/or math) will open up opportunities for students, including better jobs, furthering their education or developing new job skills,

having a better family life, and being able to do basic tasks for themselves.

I will conclude that, because of all the benefits that our students get by attending our schools, I humbly ask for those \$500.000 more to help continue the work we do in our communities.

Thank you very much,

Tuipate Fidele Mubiay